

# "THE CALL OF THE RACE"

By Rev. Charles Clifton Penick, D. D.

What shall we do with the negroes? What will they do with us? These two questions press home for an answer upon all that is live, right and hopeful in our government, education and religion. Answered they must be, and will be, if not by us willingly and intelligently, then by the great fixed laws and forces, that sweep through time, destructive, or constructive, regardless of the consequences to human pleasure, plan, purpose of life. We can no more stop or stay them, than we can stay the stars in their courses, or the years in their rolling. We may study, know, and to some degree, lend a hand in the guiding of these forces; for so God has ennobled man to be his co-worker—but stop or stay them, we may not; they are coming on steady, strong, sure, as from the beginning, and strew the shores of time with success or failure, construction or destruction, life or death, just as men have been wise or unwise enough to co-operate with, or dare to ignore or resist them.

We here, in these "United States," have been brought face to face with one of the great, and it may be, terrible issues of the "race" problem. Do not mistake the word, nor confound, nor confuse its meaning. It is "The Race Problem." Not the educational, social, political, labor, nor any other problem, save the "race" problem, and all the rest as they may enter into, or stand related to it. The creation, ordering, potentiality, possibilities, destinies and results of races and racial life and glory, are things of God far greater and more fixed and powerful than any and all plans of men, for State, school, social order of living.

God in His wisdom created Races, not only with different skins, faces, forms, proportions of animal make up, but also of just as different minds, intuitions, spiritual realizations and conceptions of truth, purposes, duties and ends in life and living, as they show in bodily differences, and he "Hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." (Acts, 17:26.) The failure to give these racial and irreconcilable differences of racehood their due value in adjusting them to each other has produced and is producing the folly, confusion and perilous threatenings, that stand all too dark and terrible just before us, and will not down for any formality, incantation of religion, or state-craft, any legerdemain known to church, or state, or school. We cannot ignore the realness and God ordained powers of races, with the laws by which these are and ever must be governed, and get anything but failure, followed by disaster, and if not corrected, conflict and death. If we would hush the dread mutterings of woe, clear the confusions, wild and increasing, bring the smile of peace where now darkens the frown of racial war, and hope where now lowers the clouds of despair, we must at all costs and regardless of all humiliation, go back and clear out our relations between black and white, and brown, and red peoples, as "RACES." We must no longer ignore the fact that races have from the beginning had God-given ideals, and that only as the men of a race worked out its own ideal, could they find the true developing of manhood, and rise and stand in their God-given and assigned places in the great ranks of His plans and purposes. NO RACE CAN FIND ITS PERFECTED MANHOOD BY MARRYING AND INTERMEDIATING WITH THE GOD-GIVEN IDEAL OF ANOTHER RACE. This truth is woven through and through all the triumphs and disasters of time; to ignore it is to move to failure and disaster, if not destruction. One race may, and often must, go to school to another. Races may train races, as men train children; but the scholar race must be as careful to respect the laws, rules, aims of the master race, as must the pupils of their teacher's. One ideal protected and impressed by one will, must reign, or confusion, failure, chaos will follow. When the school days are done, and the scholar steps forth into his own place and station of life, then he may and must bring all his gathered force of mind and handicraft into play, order them by his own plans, and project them by his own personality, to the purposes that complete his life. But so long as he is at school he must obey the master's mind. Observe this rule, and a remnant of a race may school itself for years and centuries under another race; and if it has the mind and force of character, may acquire all that the tutoring race can give. Japan affords, perhaps, the most wonderful illustration of this that has ever been given under the sun. Quietly, humbly, without boast or resentment, she sent her best to school amid the strongest nations of the earth. Diligently, obediently, faithfully, they played their parts as students under masters, without (so far as known), resisting one rule, custom or law of their tutors, and in one short life time—lo, she comes forth and stands amid the Nations and races of the world, a giant athlete, wrapped in all the security of her own ideals, but skilled

in all the arts of all her tutors, she presses on and up to perfect the ideal Japanese, rounded out and glorified, girded and coronated, with all that is most splendid and best from the races of a world. She has marred no race's ideal, she has sacredly guarded and glorified her own. What she has done and is doing the other races of the world should strive to do. Yea, must do, or fall below their possibilities. THE NEGRO RACE, or that ten millions of it in this country, is perhaps at this time most in need of realizing this truth, and laying hold of it with a death-like grip and determination, bring themselves up to the hope and life wrapped in it. Because white men, maddened by political intoxication or success in battle, blundered into hypothesizing that one race could work out its destiny by taking the helm of another, or struggling for the possession of that ideal's helm, there is no reason for pressing this error to its wrecking conclusion. We shall perhaps get the most unbiased and clearest comprehension of this vital law if we make a study of the ideal history God has left us for this very purpose. The scope and purpose of this paper, being simply to direct men's attention to the laws of racial life and development for study, and not in any sense a full study of these truths, must of necessity be brief.

It was not because God was weak, forgetful, or wanting in love and purpose that Israel, though he went into Egypt when Joseph was next to the throne, and came out when Moses might have been in that throne, that He caused the Nation's time to be spent in serving in the brick kilns or in the toll as manual laborers, instead of amid the lobbies and offices of the court, or splendors of the mental school's arenas. Israel was sent to Egypt, not to make skillful politicians and polished Egyptians, but to get the handicrafts and discipline of mind and body that would be of most service in working out a civilization yet to come, the pattern of which "should be shown in the mount." Moses, as Pharaoh might and probably would have made a magnificent one, but he never would have been the world's "Moses," the great light and glory of humanity. No man, no race can ever grow great by aping another. Israel must leave Egypt with all of its ancient and splendid civilization, must cross that boatless, bridgeless sea, and with awe and agony press on, on, on, thirsting, struggling, trusting, through that "great and terrible wilderness," to Horeb's flame-wrapped, thunder-speaking heights, and there beneath the terrors of that Divine nearness, receive his own Heaven drawn ideal, the working out of which should ultimately produce "The Son of Man," one and the same with "The Son of God." Man making in the "image of God" is the highest fruitage of family, National or racial life. So the God man lay wrapped in the development of Israel's own racial ideal and never could have come from going to any possible height in that of the Egyptian. The skill learned in Egyptian workshop enabled Israel to build all the material structure necessary to housing and homing of the visible parts of the ideal, and so may that gained by any race from any other race help it to go forward in the construction of the God-given ideals; but the ideal must be its own—must be sacredly guarded—and to it must be heroically and sacrificially given all that is noblest and best in the race. Its Isaacs must be laid on its altars, its Christ must ascend its cross. Thus, and only thus, can any race develop its manhood. "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me," is the voice of the perfect life, pressing to its perfect ideal. "The Son of Man" found the appliances of rallying beaten humanity, arresting a world from despair and saving humanity from death, not on Caesar's throne, but on Calvary's cross, where he crowned and glorified Israel's ideal of life and sacrifice.

Now then, hastening to the light and truth in the issue before us: The Negro race can never be aping the white man. It can never be safe attempting to mar or manage the white man's ideal of life. He must to his own mount, however deep the sea to cross, however "great and terrible" the wilderness horrors may wait. He must smite its rock, however dry and hard; sweeten its waters, however bitter, by faith; fight its fiery serpents, however numerous and deadly, by the cross; until he comes where God meets him and gives him his own "pattern from the mount" and go on where God's "pillar of cloud and fire" leads, and there do and be and live that life, that will make his racial man a perfect "black man," as Moses was a perfect "Israelite," in Canaan and not Pharaoh in Egypt. Pharaoh finds his glory in Egypt and homes his ashes in the pyramids; Moses finds his in Horeb, and rests where angel hands laid him, in his unknown grave on Nebo. Nor could Moses make great his own children, marred with the racial mixture; we hear nothing of their ever playing any part worth the name amid the pure-blooded Israelites. Aaron, with his pure-

blooded wife must needs succeed to the priesthood. Hobab was a great help in passing the wilderness; the mixed bloods can and do perform noble work, passing the treasures from one race to another, but with the passage of this the wilderness period between the races onto the yon side of racial homing and perfecting, in the very nature of things they must sink back into the bosom of the one race or the other and be lost as racial factors.

Once more: The white man, or any other race, having received his racial ideal, he must guard and keep it on penalty of his own destruction. This is no sectional, no political matter, and they who think it such think but shallowly. It is racial, radical, vital. The white race must "make all according to the pattern shown it in the mount." The instant the black man attempts to "intrude his pattern into that mould, sweep his brush on that canvass where the white man is painting his soul vision, there is going to be trouble, anywhere, everywhere, and always to the end. Not because the white man hates the black man, but because he loves his ideal, and in it is wrapped all the hope of his racial development, and the possibilities of his manhood. He has seen his vision and presses with all his might to carve it into reality. Look, learn, imitate the white man as long, and as much as he pleases, may the black man, so long as he keeps his brush off the white man's canvass, wherein he is producing the vision of his soul—so long as he keeps his will power from the ark's helm, that is guiding the white race to its own God-ordered haven. To do otherwise is for the black man to throw away his own ideal, and with it all hope and possibility of his full greatness, and to mar the greatness of the white man. Hence these strange, fiery, terrible, otherwise inexplicable flashes of fury, that blaze relentless and deadly in race clashes. The black man's glory lies in his realizing that God made him to be His "Black Man," and seeking to be that great creature that God gives him, and not another. God made no mistakes when he created the Negro, and it is the mistake of the Negro's life if he says or acts as if He did. A continent enriched with all the vast undeveloped and unseen treasures of the tropics waits the black man's mastery. The glory of a race calls to him for its unveiling and uplifting, and the wisdom and power of God say—Amen. Hear, O Black Man! and go up through the fire to thy cross and to thy throne.

The question will rise to readers' minds: "What does he think of the Negro's possibility—can he develop? Is there hidden in the resources of his nature the vast forces to unfold, develop and glorify a race?" In answering this question I would speak guardedly, calmly, and with a sacred consciousness of the responsibility before God and man.

Much of my life has been spent among the Negroes, both here and in Africa, and despite all the words of men to the contrary, despite all the terrible degeneration that unwise and wicked men have wrought, I most unhesitatingly affirm: I do believe that the race has hidden in its bosom the forces that wait the light of truth and the spirit of God to make them great. Of all things that astounded me most during my work and stay in Africa, was the wonderful and marvelous treasures of truth that lay wrapped in the mind of the race. They certainly have ideals of government and ideas of God, and right, and the immortality of the soul that are not far behind the "Books of Moses." Yea, they have an idea of "A Savior" which is way beyond and much nearer our own Christ, than "Buddah" or any other character I have met outside our New Testament. I have a collection of Folk Lore gathered from the Pagan tribes, that is, to say the least, as near the ideal character and true God as anything I have ever read from Greek, Roman or any other ancient. The truth is there, but waiting the "Spirit's" vitalizing breath. The race is sorely riven, scattered, beaten, battered, but God who made, and who has kept it alive thus far, can, and will work out His design through it. I believe in God, and I believe in His wonderful love for the human race. I believe if the black man will rise with a conscious power of his God's truthness, and seek from Him guidance to his own greatest self, God will meet him, and lead him on along the best way to his loftiest possibilities. But I believe this will never come until he first fully and gladly owns the nobility of himself, and so forever stops trying to be a mere apier of the white or any other man. As long as his lot is cast in the midst of white men let him learn of them all he can, and do his best work with them, but ever keep from trying to rule their government or mar their ideal; and ever keep pressing deeper and deeper into his own heart and soul the truth that as God made him a Negro he has the right to rejoice and hope and look to Him for the fulfillment of his perfect manhood, along the lines of his racial ideals, which are as sealed to the white man, as the white man's are to him.

The great call of God to all the races of humanity is: "Let my peo-

ple go that they may serve me." (Ex. 7:16.) Wrapped in these words the hope, the wisdom, the life, the glory of humanity, time and eternity struggle to their birth and enthroning. Trusting to their truthness, pressing to their light, the whole creation groaneth and travelth in earnest expectation, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19-22.) As men, nations, ages, civilizations, races, humanity, hear, heed, study, know, obey and with unreserved might, joy and heroism, respond to this "High Calling of God," they rise into the light, joy and glory of His life, and live. Freedom to go where and be what is of highest service to God, is and ever must be the placing of man where he is of most service, joy and glory to his brother man. Israel in Egypt's brick kilns might add to Pharaoh's coffers, but Israel in Canaan feeds the life of a race and produces the Savior of a world. The day must come, the day is coming, when deeper and deeper down in a world's life this glorifying command of God will sound, with strong and mightier sway, until all the forces of His Kingdom will bend to bring each man, nation, race, generation on and up to where the highest service of God waits the doing, and from thence each shall grow resplendent and shine forth to all, as do the stars of heaven now, from their God-appointed orbits, gather their splendors from His great source of light, and bathe each, all his fellows in the glories of his heaven perfected individuality.

C. CLIFTON PENICK.  
Fairmont, W. Va., August 27th, 1934.

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